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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY Austria

SUBJECT Unfavorable Reaction to Withdrawal
of the French Troops of Occupation

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DATE DISTR. 1 MAR 54

NO. OF PAGES 2

NO. OF ENCLS.

SUPP. TO
REPORT NO.

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1. In the Austrian Tyrol France's prestige is at the lowest ebb. Actually, no tension existed between the Tyrolean population and the occupation forces, but the latter had aggravated a serious housing shortage and the Austrians did not regard them as being of any military value in case of a Soviet attack. Nevertheless the sudden withdrawal destroyed what there had been left of French prestige. Last summer, the Soviets, after a lull of several years, followed the American example of waiving their claim to Austria's occupation tribute. That was one of the cheap gifts the Soviets offered Austria in order to influence the German elections. The French (and the British) could not well keep on cashing Austria's tribute therefore they had to follow suit. The Austrians now give the following interpretation: As long as we paid the expenses, they liked it in our country. Now, when they would have to pay for their own stay, they quit!
2. The few Austrians who are able to reason politically are developing the following line: We have been told some time ago that Western troops were in Austria no longer as occupiers but as protectors and potential allies. That was in keeping with the idea of a joint defense of the free world. It appealed to us. When has the Soviet danger disappeared? Have the Western powers now abandoned not only their roll-back but also the containment conception? Is that the European spirit which we have been asked to embrace?
3. It is true that the French have encouraged the formation of an Austrian gendarmerie, the nucleus of an Austrian Army. The two battalions of that

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